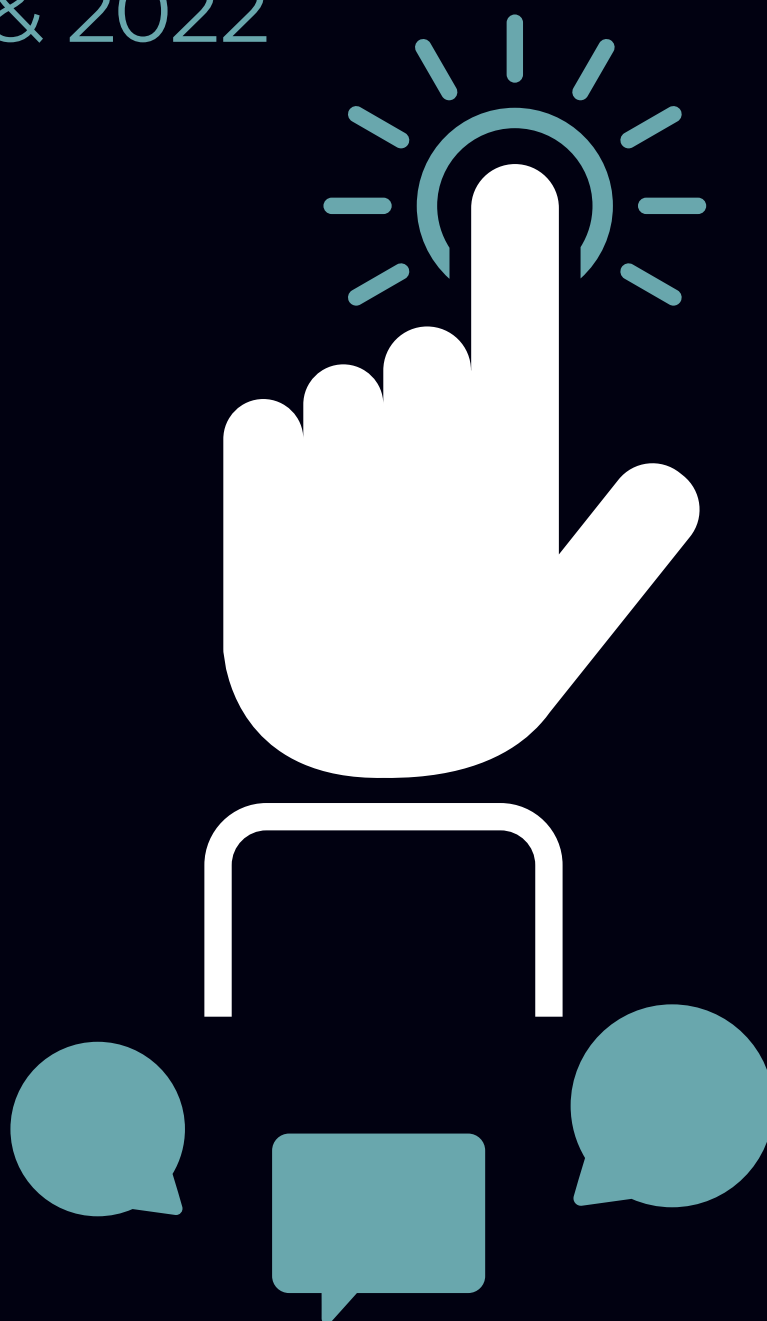


# TURNING WORDS INTO ACTIONS

The Strategic Plan of  
Ana Liffey Drug Project  
2021 & 2022



# Chairperson's Foreword

The challenge when writing a strategic plan is explaining something quite complicated in simple concise terms. We wanted people to be able to read this quickly and say to themselves - I understand who Ana Liffey are, what they do and what they are trying to achieve over the period of this strategic plan. Naturally, we consulted with our stakeholders with regard to the latter; and we hope you agree that we have kept this strategic plan simple and focussed on what matters.

*"The flexibility shown in 2020 has been inspiring" <sup>1</sup>*

At the beginning of 2020, little did we know how the world would be changed by COVID-19. Generally speaking the pandemic has amplified what is – for better or for worse. Irish society is compassionate; and this was amplified across the country. This compassion was very evident in the response to people who use drugs and who are homeless. I am proud to say that Ana Liffey was at the forefront of this compassionate response in Dublin and the Midwest.

*"Very focused on client's needs, COVID-19 environment tested this and really showed commitment, strong willingness to work with everyone, even the most chaotic - not said lightly!" <sup>2</sup>*

The teams showed great flexibility from the outset of the pandemic; when Ana Liffey's team found itself on the frontline alongside other health workers. The COVID-19 crisis proved to be a test of one particular value of Ana Liffey and that is our pragmatism. I'm pleased to say that right across the organisation we turned our words into actions; we did what we said we would do; we identified and managed risks; we identified problems and focused on solutions; and we more than delivered on our commitments. We embodied our values.

*"[The question is] How can Ana Liffey adapt?" <sup>3</sup>*

Ana Liffey pivoted quickly and responded in partnership to COVID-19. We have also been supported to maintain, and expand in parts, our addiction services. So much has changed and so much will change in the coming years, which makes it harder to predict exactly what we should focus our efforts on. That is why it was even more important to listen to our stakeholders. We have taken on board what we have heard and we are grateful for the overwhelmingly positive feedback which we had received through the consultation process. We will be focusing on maintaining and developing our front-line services – as always, we plan to do this in

collaboration with the people who use our services, the State and our NGO partners. We will work hard to support the State to deliver on the commitments within the National Drug Strategy ‘Reducing Harm - Supporting Recovery’. Finally, we will celebrate Ana Liffey’s 40th anniversary year, 2022, with the aim of not only being the first ‘Low Threshold - Harm Reduction’ service in Ireland, but the best we can possibly be.

**Eddie Matthews**  
Chair of the Board



1. Stakeholder quote  
2. Stakeholder quote  
3. Stakeholder quote

# Introduction

Ana Liffey Drug Project provides psychosocial and health services to people who actively use drugs. As a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) we also have a role to play in supporting the roll out of the National Drug Strategy “Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025”.

This strategic plan covers a two-year period, we believe that focusing strategically on this shorter time frame is prudent, as Ireland continues to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the strategy for 2021 & 2022 sets out ambitious, but attainable goals across a range of areas. Ultimately, delivering on it will strengthen the organisation by enabling us to provide better services to those who need them and good value for money to those who support us.

The consultation process found that there is a vast amount of support amongst stakeholders for the ethos and focus of Ana Liffey. Service users also commented on the positive attitude and caring nature of staff.

## *Why do you use Ana Liffey's services?*

*“Because I feel it does a lot more for you than other services do.”<sup>4</sup>*

The staff were applauded, by other stakeholders, for their work, flexibility and innovation particularly in the current climate of COVID-19. There was positivity about the future position of Ana Liffey in the response to the ongoing public health challenges and growing complexity of drug use.

One of the main themes that arose from the consultation was the need for more partnerships and joined up thinking on the issues of drug addiction, homelessness and mental health. Ana Liffey was recognised as having a great ability to foster relationships with other organisations and this is something that was highly valued by stakeholders.

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4. Stakeholder quote

## Building on the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

Ana Liffey made significant progress on many of our strategic goals during the three year lifetime of the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. Many of the previous strategic goals have come to a natural conclusion and some are no longer relevant to our current work.

Notably, during 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic thrust change upon us and we responded definitively. Much of our work altered and our immediate priorities shifted to supporting the COVID-19 response.

## Developing the 2021 & 2022 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan 2021 & 2022 builds on the foundations of our last plan, reflecting a practical but still ambitious outline for activity over the period of this strategic plan. The new plan represents a synthesis of many contributions. There has been consideration given to feedback from our service users and the challenges they face; attention has been paid to the sectoral context including economic, legislative and social issues; and reflection on the various contributions made by stakeholder groups.

## Consultation Process

An external consultant designed and managed a consultation process to ensure internal and external stakeholder input. The CEO took responsibility for developing a draft plan in conjunction with the HR and Governance Subgroup of the Board. A draft of the plan was prepared and presented to the Board of Management for consideration. The Board made further amendments before finalising the strategic plan.

Central to the whole process was ensuring the views of those who use our services, and those of other key stakeholders, were included and were taken on board.

# Measuring Achievement

It is important to be able to effectively monitor delivery of the strategy. Overall responsibility for delivery of this strategy lies with the CEO. However, its achievement requires the focus and commitment of everyone in the organisation. All key tasks in the strategy are owned by either the CEO or a Senior Manager. The plan can be further broken down into more finely detailed tasks, each of which is the responsibility of an identified team member. The key issue is that at each level of the plan, named individuals are responsible for achieving SMART objectives relating to its delivery to facilitate easy monitoring and adjustment. An update on delivery of the plan is a standing item on the Board of Management's agenda.

## Conclusion

Ana Liffey is a home-grown response to the harms caused to the person who uses drugs, the family who loves them and the community they live in. Ana Liffey was the first Harm Reduction service in Ireland and we are proud of this fact. However, we have always understood that we are one part of the national response and we are honoured to work alongside all our colleagues, State and NGO, providing treatment and rehabilitation, housing and other services to the people we all serve.

Adapting is about more than just surviving it is essential for any organisation to excel. Ana Liffey has always been good at reflecting and changing; and much innovative work has been born out of Ana Liffey since our establishment in 1982.

The strategic planning process affords us the space to learn from our past, consider our present environment and plan for the future. The feedback from the stakeholders (service users, staff members, Board members, funders and others) was tremendously positive. For that we are all grateful. Much has been done and there is always more to do – with the help of others Ana Liffey will serve, adapt, develop and excel.

## About Ana Liffey

Ana Liffey Drug Project's primary activity is to provide 'low threshold - harm reduction' services to people who use drugs. By low threshold, we mean that the barriers to availing of our services are kept as low as possible. By harm reduction, we mean that we seek to reduce the harm that drug use causes to individuals, families and communities. In addition to our direct services, we also engage in advocacy and support roles at an organisational level in the addiction sector in Ireland and beyond.

## Vision

Our vision is for a society where all people affected by problem substance use are treated with dignity and respect and have access to quality services.

## Mission

Our mission is to work with people affected by problem substance use and the organisations that assist them. We do this to reduce harm to individuals and society, and to provide opportunities for development of those individuals and organisations.

# Values

<p>Ana Liffey neither promotes nor denounces substance use but seeks to respond to problems associated with it.</p> <p><b>What this means:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support people to reduce harm</li> <li>• We respond to people's needs</li> <li>• We recognise the potential of the people we work with</li> <li>• We provide evidence based responses</li> <li>• We are innovative.</li> </ul>	<p>Ana Liffey believes in rights and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>What this means:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support people to know their rights</li> <li>• We encourage people to take responsibility</li> <li>• We treat all people who come into contact with Ana Liffey with dignity and respect.</li> </ul>
<p>Ana Liffey is pragmatic.</p> <p><b>What this means:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We turn words into actions</li> <li>• What matters is what we do</li> <li>• We identify, take and manage risks</li> <li>• We are solution focused</li> <li>• We deliver on our commitments.</li> </ul>	<p>Ana Liffey aims to make a positive contribution to society.</p> <p><b>What this means:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively engage in the promotion of a partnership approach</li> <li>• We are open and accountable</li> <li>• We are a quality led organisation and a leader in good professional practice</li> <li>• We have a local, national and international perspective.</li> </ul>

*"Staff are brilliant, fantastic, the team is amazing...Ana Liffey do really well at building strong teams. They have a clear vision and mission and the staff buy into it."*<sup>5</sup>

5. Stakeholder quote



# Range of Services

At Ana Liffey we provide contact, assessment, intervention, and referral services to a range of service users in a variety of locations. Partnership is a key element of how we work; in all our services we seek to work together with other organisations to ensure that vulnerable people affected by problem substance use experience a seamless continuum of care. We currently provide services in the Dublin and Midwest Regions. Service delivery in each area is tailored to the presenting need.

Examples of the types of intervention Ana Liffey currently provide include:

## Key Working and Case Management

We provide one-to-one advocacy and support services, supporting our service users to make positive changes in their lives.

## Nursing and Medical Services

We provide nursing services on a fixed site and outreach basis.

We also facilitate access to weekly GP services through our partnership work with GMQ Medical.

## Group Services

We run a range of tailored groups in each local area focusing on harm reduction, relapse prevention and peer education and support. COVID-19 has had an impact on the delivery of low threshold group work.

## Inreach Services

We work in partnership with other organisations to bring services to people. We welcome other agencies into our services to work onsite alongside our teams.

## Assertive Outreach

We provide street based outreach on a regular basis or in response to requests from stakeholders. There are a number of reasons people may not wish to or be able to access centre-based services; by conducting outreach we can ensure that these people are not excluded from receiving a service.

## Overdose prevention & Needle and Syringe Programme (NSP)

We provide overdose prevention and NSP services on an inreach and outreach basis to our service users.

## Prison Work

We provide groups and one-to-ones in prison. We also provide community based support to people leaving prison. COVID-19 has had an impact on the delivery of work inside the prisons.

# Strategic Goals – 2021 & 2022

*“Management are refreshing to work with; and they have a positive collaborative approach.”<sup>6</sup>*

## STRATEGIC GOALS – 2021 & 2022

1. To meet the health needs of people we work with, we will collaborate to expand our nursing and medical service provision, specifically bringing these services to the people who need them on an in-reach and outreach basis.
2. To reach people who are not engaged in services, we will collaborate to expand our low threshold key working and case management.
3. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 amongst the people we work with, we will continue to maintain a public health approach - collaborating to provide specific interventions incorporated into our existing low-threshold harm reduction programmes.
4. To meet the needs of the people we work with, we will collaborate to bring accessible low-threshold stabilisation and treatment services to people.
5. We will further develop a program of support for staff to help ensure staff wellbeing across the organisation.
6. We will train and develop our staff and volunteers to increasingly ensure our interventions are:
  - Trauma Informed
  - Inclusive of vulnerable minority groups
7. We will mark our 40th anniversary year in 2022, with a series of service user led events; and specific initiatives.
8. We will seek opportunities to support the implementation of the State's health led approach to the possession of drugs for personal use.

For further information about Ana Liffey, we invite you to visit our website [aldp.ie](http://aldp.ie), or follow @AnaLiffey on social media platforms.

6. Stakeholder quote



**ANA LIFFEY**  
DRUG PROJECT